



chances FOR
CHILDREN

BUtTLEuk

Ethnicity and our Grantmaking

Mapping our applicants and grantees for our Chances for Children grants against the England, Wales and Northern Ireland Census data.



Buttle UK: Ethnicity and our Grantmaking

October 2023

Buttle UK is a charity dedicated to helping children and young people in the UK who have experienced crisis, live in financial hardship and are dealing with multiple challenging social issues. We provide support designed to improve emotional, educational and social outcomes through our Chances for Children grants and, for some children whose home environment is disruptive and chaotic, grants which allow them to go to boarding school.

1. Introduction

As part of our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy we made a commitment to look at who applies and who receives our grants. This is to primarily understand whether there might be barriers to accessing Buttle UK for any groups of children and young people. Our objective is that Buttle UK receives applications and awards grants representatively against need and against criteria across the UK.

Following the release of Census 2021 data on 29 November 2022, for the first time we compared how the ethnicity of our Chances for Children applicants and grantees map against the ethnicities reported in the Census in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Scotland's Census took place in March 2022 and the ethnicity data is due to be published in Summer 2024.¹

We wanted to do this analysis at a national and regional level. This was to:

- See how representative our applicants and grantees are of the population in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Understand and take action if we had any very significant gaps or missing groups
- Identify any patterns or anomalies

It is important to understand that we did not expect nor do we seek exact correlation with the census. We provide grants to support around 4,500 - 6,000 highly targeted children and young people in a year. This is a tiny proportion of the UK's population. We are not a universal service nor do we 'select' our applicants. The circumstances they face and the alignment to our [criteria](#) are what drives an application and our decision to award or reject. Each application is made by a frontline worker who is working with the children and young people. We can partially influence which communities and ethnicities have access to an application by recruiting referral partners who understand and are trusted by specific groups.

¹ Analysis on Scotland ethnicity data is provided in the addendum (A1) at the end of this report (added April 2025).

In Section 4, to provide some context to the figures we have also looked at the prevalence of poverty for different ethnicities. This is because poverty is a critical factor in every grant we award, alongside other significant issues and trauma.

We also used the census data to look at gender and a summary of those findings are in Section 6.

2. What data did we use?

Census data is collected for everyone in the home and the published results are for 'usual residents', which includes children, young people and adults. We took the Census data for

England and Wales from the Office of National Statistics census site:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

Northern Ireland:

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/census-2021-main-statistics-ethnicity-tables>

Buttle UK uses the [list of 19 ethnic groups](#) that were developed for the 2021 Census. We have been using these ethnicity categories since 16 April 2022. We analysed our own data for the **lead applicant** (this is the parent/carer or an estranged young person), from 16 April 2022 to 27 April 2023. That gave us anonymised information for 3,613 lead applicants. As our data is only for parents and carers and estranged young people and the census covers children and adults, it does mean the two sets of data are not exactly the same². However they are comparable enough for us to complete the mapping exercise detailed below.

The ethnicity data in our application forms is provided by a frontline worker who is closely supporting the family and they select the ethnicity option on behalf of the family. This means some of the data could be incorrect. Referrers have an option to choose 'not disclosed' if the ethnicity isn't known.

3. Methodology

We sorted all Buttle UK data into regional subsets using the Census ethnicity headings. Then we compared it, line by line, for each nation and region. Looking only at ethnicity, we focused on:

1. All applicants
2. All grantees
3. Award and rejection rates for different groups

Throughout we were looking for any anomalies and patterns that might require further consideration.

² Buttle UK has been collecting ethnicity data for children and young people from 16 April 2022 but this is not yet available for analysis. Future analysis will include the children's data.

We created charts comparing our data with the census data (see Sections 5 and 7). To better understand the distribution of all ethnic groups, we created a second chart for each area that excluded the largest dataset, White British.

The England and Wales Census definition of ethnic groups is as follows:

“The ethnic group that the person completing the census feels they belong to. This could be based on their culture, family background, identity or physical appearance. Respondents could choose one out of 19 tick-box response categories, including write-in response options.”

The ethnic groups in the census and used by Buttle UK are:

Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Bangladeshi	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Chinese	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Indian	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Pakistani	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Other Asian
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Caribbean		Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Other Black	
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	
White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	White: Irish	White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	White: Roma	White: Other White
Other ethnic group: Arab		Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group		

4. Findings - Buttle UK applications v census

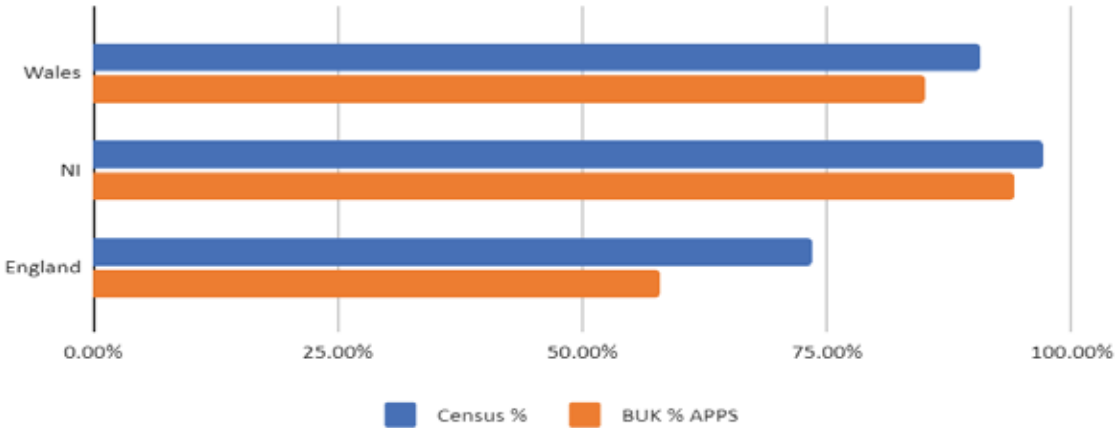
We support a very small fraction of the UK’s population. The 3,631 individuals analysed in roughly one year of applications equal 0.01% of the census population. Despite that, at a national level in England, applications to us mainly align to the census figures or have higher representations for most ethnic groups. The exceptions to that alignment are White British; White Irish; Chinese; Indian and Roma.

The ethnic groups that are most under-represented in applications at national and regional level are Chinese and Roma (with no applications to Buttle UK from the latter group). Both groups, at a population level in England and Wales of 0.6% and 0.2% (101,000) respectively, are amongst the smallest ethnic groups. We are using the census data to see where in England and Wales such under-represented communities are clustered to start outreach to appropriate agencies³. However, we recognise that, even with outreach, numbers of applications from such groups will be low.

³ Buttle UK requires that referral agencies must be public sector organisations, registered charities or registered social housing providers, with frontline support workers who understand children’s development.

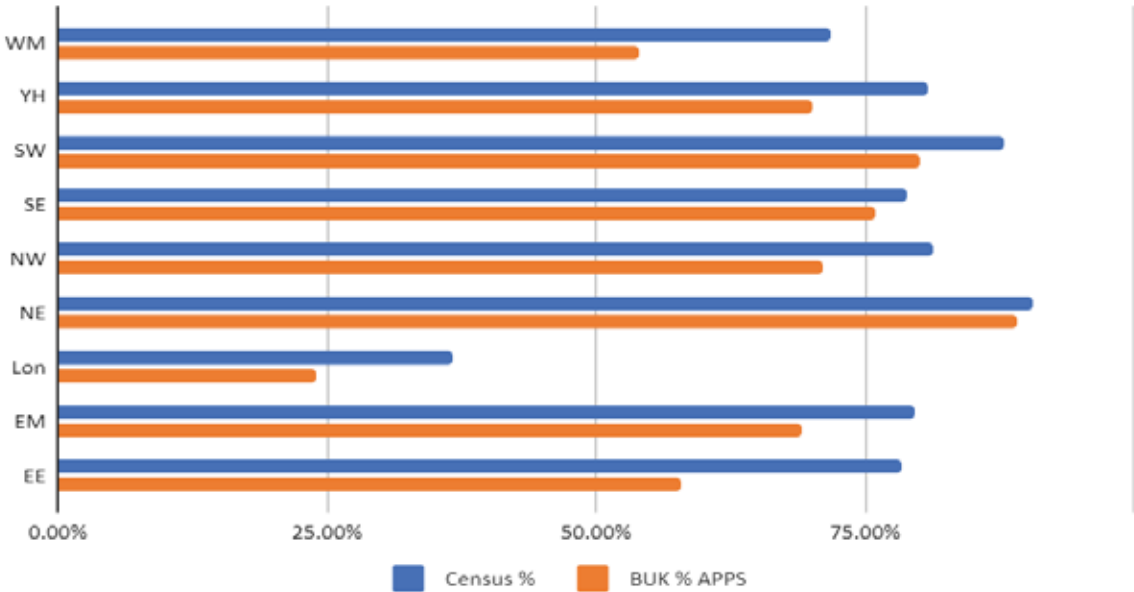
In terms of applications, White British (or White in Northern Ireland⁴) are the largest ethnic group in every country, and in every region. They make up 58% of applicants in England (73.5% in the census), 84.5% of applicants in Wales (90.6% in the census) and 94% of applicants in Northern Ireland. Applications from both Wales and Northern Ireland are three to five percentage points different from the census figures. The 15.5 percentage point difference in England is significantly higher.

4.1 Percentages of White British in Wales and England and White in Northern Ireland (NI)



The difference between White British population percentage and percentage of applications varies across regions from 2 percentage points in the North East to 21 percentage points in the East of England. After East of England, West Midlands has the biggest difference at 18 percentage points. The average regional difference is 10.5 percentage points.

4.2 Percentage of White British in applications and census in the English regions



⁴ Northern Ireland’s census did not have White British as an option, only White.

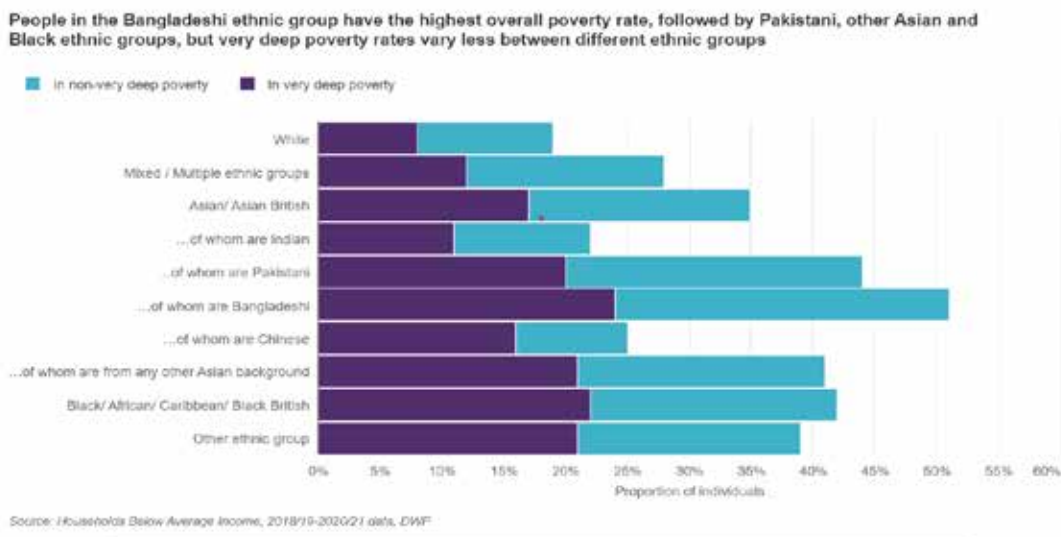
The ethnic groups we see in our applications in England, that are at a noticeably higher proportion than their population share, are Black, particularly Black British African (in England 9% of applications and 2.6% of the population); Black Caribbean (in England 5.4% of applications and 1.1% of the population) and Pakistani (in England 4.3% of applications and 2.8% of the population).

This pattern is also apparent at a regional level. Black British African is the second largest applicant group in four regions (East of England, London, North West and South East) and Pakistani is the second largest applicant group in the West Midlands. Other White is the second largest applicant group in four regions (East Midlands, North East, South West and Yorkshire & Humber), which largely follows the census population. It is most often followed by Black African as the third largest applicant group.

Other research helps us understand why we’re seeing high numbers of applications from Black and Pakistani households.

“There are persistent ethnic inequalities in child poverty across the UK. 47% of children in Asian or Asian British households and 53% of those in Black households were in poverty after housing costs, compared with just 25% of those where the head of household was White.” End Child Poverty, 2021/22 data (published 2023)

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation looked at ethnicity and poverty in May 2022⁵ and found that the risk of poverty is very high for many ethnic groups.



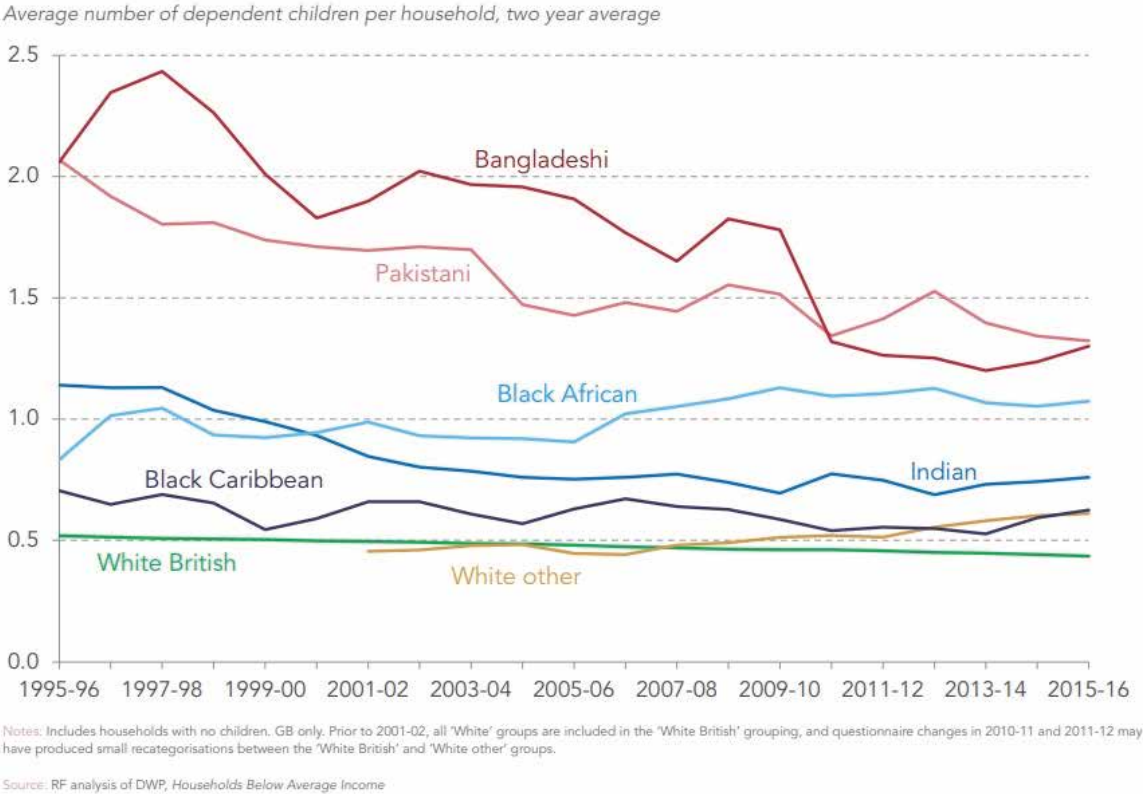
They found that people in households led by someone of Black or Bangladeshi ethnicity had the highest risk of being behind with bills. And if you were from a non-white household there was a significantly higher risk of being in arrears or going without essentials, than if you were from a white household.

⁵ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/blog/ethnicity-and-heightened-risk-very-deep-poverty> and **Ethnicity and the heightened risk of deep poverty**, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, May 2022

In 2022 research by the Runnymede Trust⁶ concluded that Black and minority ethnic people are 2.5 times more likely to be in relative poverty, and 2.2 times more likely to be in deep poverty (having an income that falls more than 50% below the relative poverty line), than their white counterparts.

One other factor might be influencing the high diversity of our applicants and grantees. Research⁷ shows that, whilst shrinking, some ethnicities have higher numbers of children than White British families.

Figure 10: Average family sizes have shrunk significantly for Bangladeshi and Pakistani households



If a significant crisis hits a family in poverty and they have large numbers of children, then they have very few, if any, resources to fall back on. It is very possible that a support worker would approach Buttle UK to seek a grant for them. As Black and Asian families are more likely to live in poverty, and, may have more children than White British families, it is not surprising that they form a significant proportion of Buttle UK’s applicants.

⁶<https://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/falling-faster-amidst-a-cost-of-living-crisis-poverty-inequality-and-ethnicity-in-the-uk>
⁷ <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2017/08/Diverse-outcomes.pdf>

5. Award and rejection rates by ethnicity for England ⁸

Our award rate for the twelve months of analysed data was 51%. As we are dealing with small data sets, two to three awards or rejections could swing the statistics very significantly for smaller groups. We share the findings in this section to be transparent and will continue to monitor this data on an annual basis.

Our three largest ethnic groups, White British, Black British African and Other White, were on average for their award/refusal rates (51% and 49% respectively). This is unsurprising for White British, as they represent such a large proportion of the cohort overall and therefore contribute greatly to the average.

Pakistani represent a high proportion of the applicant population (our fourth largest applicant group in England) at 4.3% and achieve extremely high levels of awards - almost two-thirds are awarded.

However, Other Asian and Black Caribbean groups both represent a good proportion of the applicant population (3% and 5.4% respectively), yet experience higher levels of refusal compared to the average award rate. Other Asian's award rate was 45% and Caribbean's 43%. Refusal could be due to any number of factors such as the quality of information in the application, referrer grant management and responsiveness, household income, fit against criteria or level of crisis.

Applications from Indian and Other Black groups, though smaller in terms of the overall population, had high award rates, at +12% and +10% deviation from the average respectively. In a similar vein in terms of size v. award/refusal rate, applications from Any Other Ethnic Group (at 1.9%) saw higher refusal rates, deviating 7% away from the average.

6. Gender

We compared the data we hold on gender against the census figures for England and Wales. We analysed only lead applicant data (usually the parent). Buttle UK application data had a gender split of 86.5% female to 13.1% male. The Census has a female to male split of 51% to 49%. The high number of female lead applicants is normal for us, as women predominantly take on childcare responsibility. The remaining balance of 0.4% applicants identified as trans, non-binary or did not provide their gender in the application.

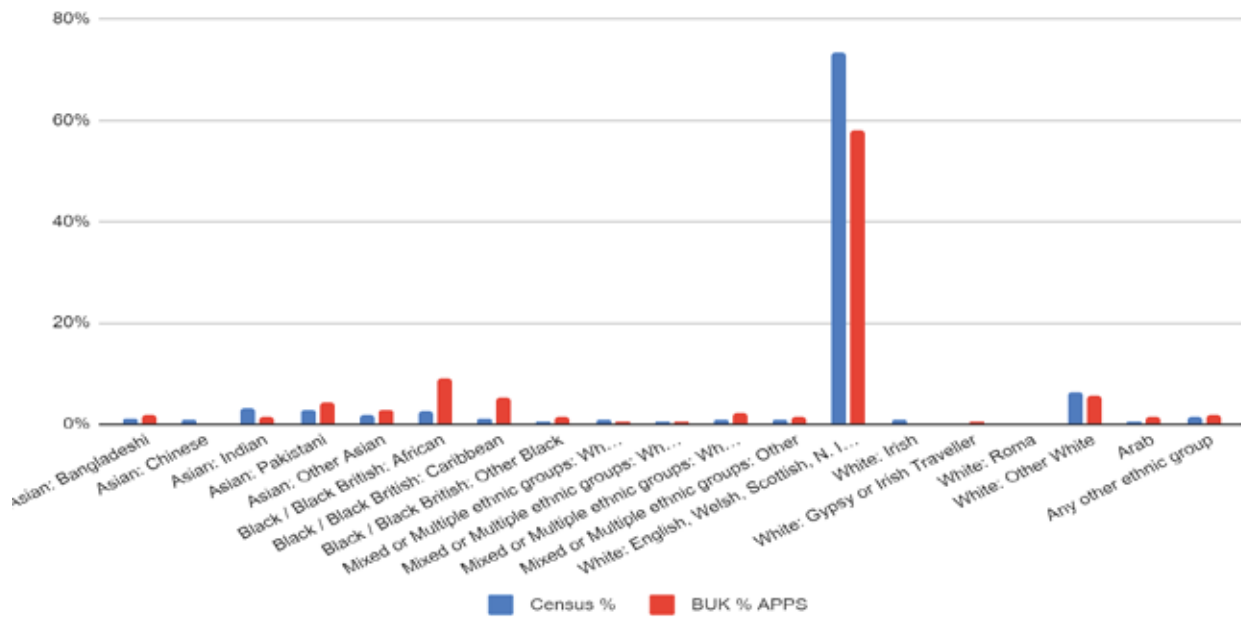
There was some variation at a regional level for male applicants, with East Midlands having 5.3% of lead applicants reporting as male whilst the highest was East of England with 19.7%. The average across all regions was 13.3%. We will continue to monitor this at a regional level. Our gender split for children across these applications was 49% female to 50% male with less than 1% identifying as transgender; non-binary or other.

⁸ The datasets for Northern Ireland, Wales and English regions are too small for meaningful analysis of award and rejection rates.

6. National tables

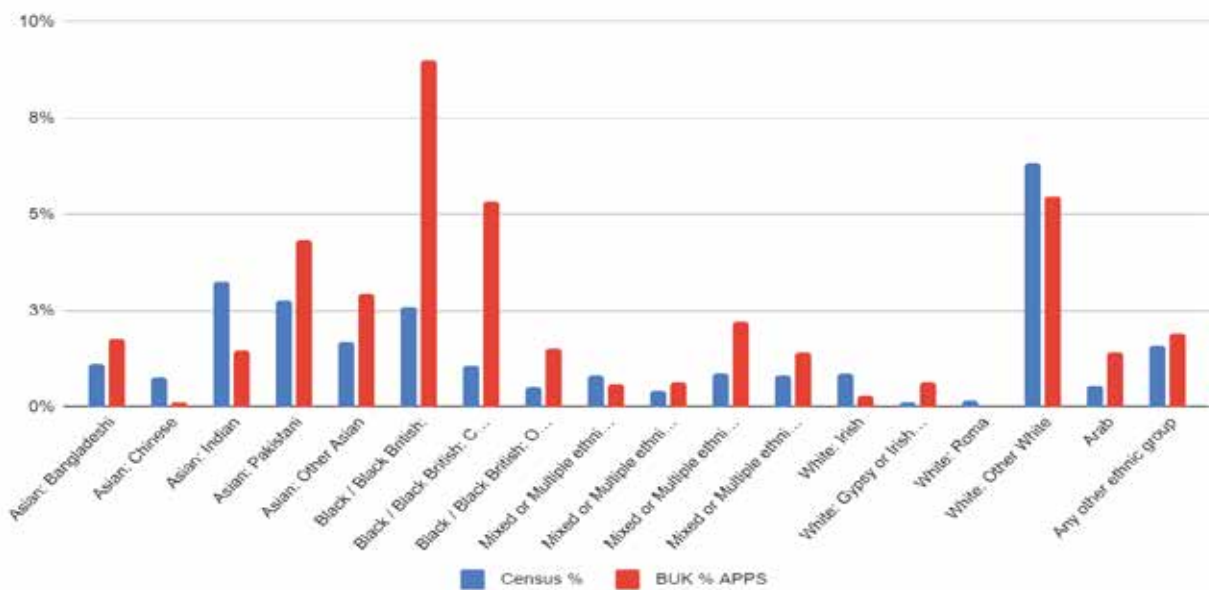
In this and the following section there are two charts for each of the nations and regions. The first shows all applications to Buttle UK by ethnicity compared to the percentage of ethnic groups within the country. The second chart shows the percentages of applications from ethnic groups, excluding White British. This makes it easier to see the different ethnic groups.

6.1 England ALL applications (n 3,343)



As discussed in Section 4, there is a 15.5 percentage point difference for White British ethnicity between census figures and applications to Buttle UK.

6.2 England ALL applications excluding White British (n 1,405)



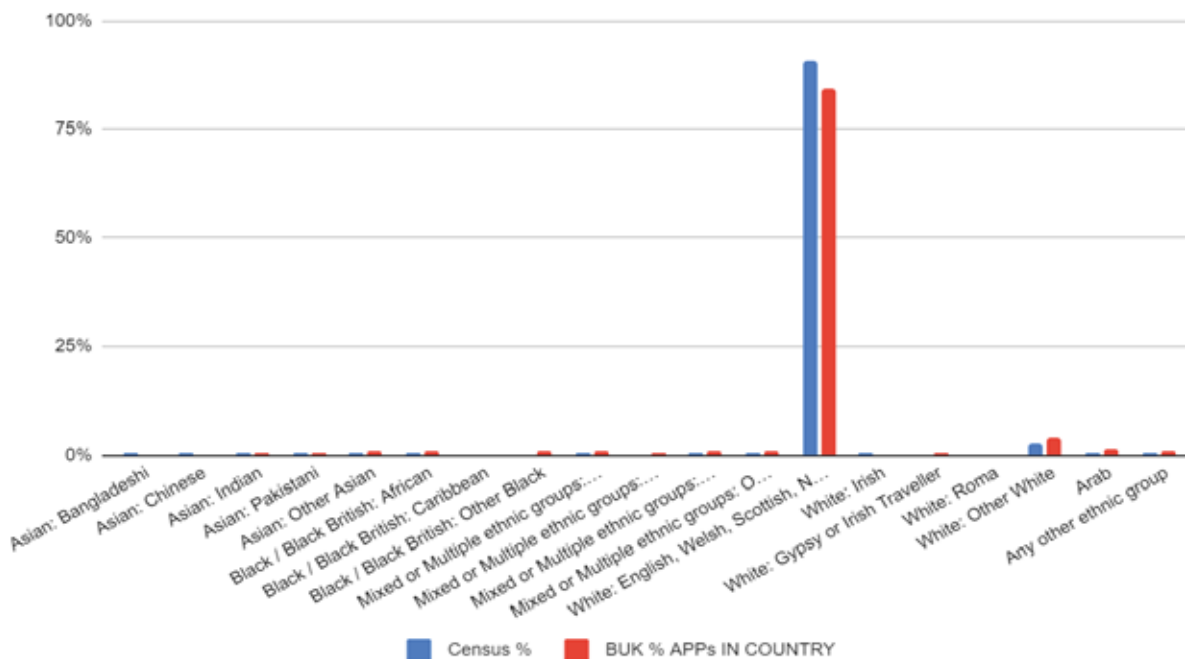
When the White British group is taken out, Black British African rises as the next largest applicant group with 300 applications. Table 6.2 shows the alignment (and often higher applications) between most ethnicities and applications to Buttle UK.

Table 6.3 sets out the difference between percentages of applications to Buttle UK and the percentages of different ethnicities within the census in England.

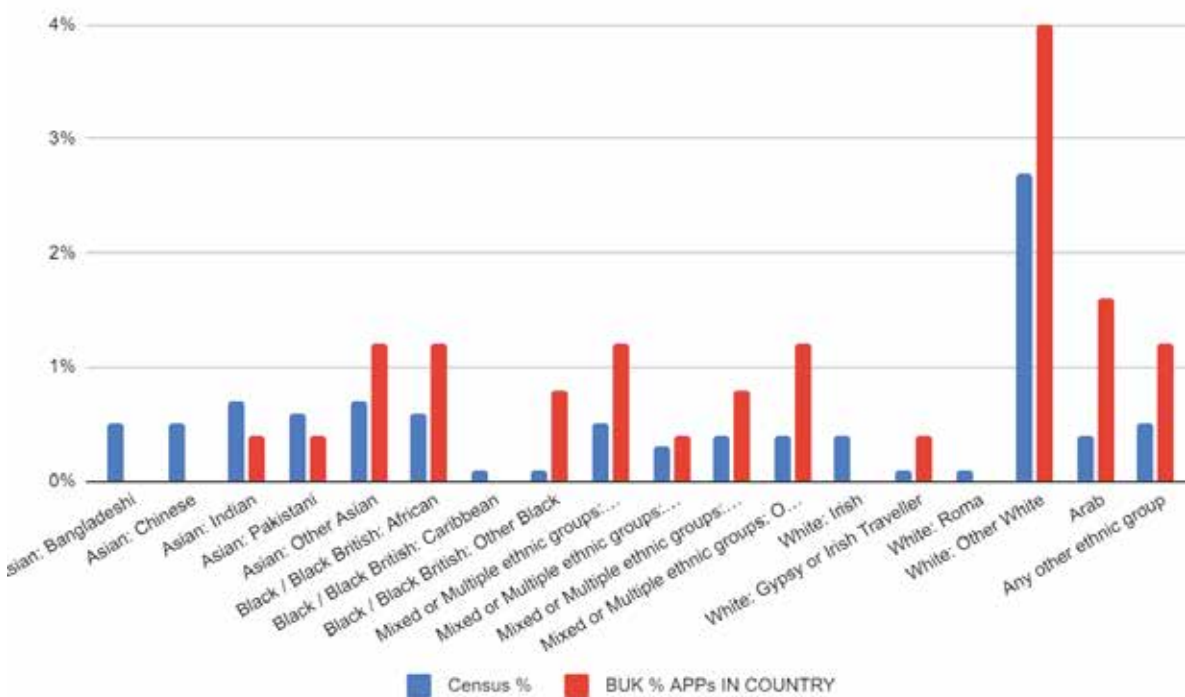
6.3 Percentage of applications and percentage within census in England

Ethnicities	Census %	Buttle UK application %	Difference
Asian: Bangladeshi	1.11%	1.80%	+0.69
Asian: Chinese	0.76%	0.10%	-0.66
Asian: Indian	3.26%	1.50%	-1.76
Asian: Pakistani	2.78%	4.30%	+1.52
Asian: Other Asian	1.69%	3.00%	+1.31
Black / Black British: African	2.60%	9.90%	+7.30
Black / Black British: Caribbean	1.10%	5.40%	+4.30
Black / Black British: Other Black	0.52%	1.50%	+0.98
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White & Asian	0.43%	0.60%	+0.17
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White & Black African	0.88%	2.20%	+1.32
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White & Black Caribbean	0.88%	2.2%	+1.3
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: Other	0.80%	1.4%	+0.6
White: English, Welsh, Scottish, N. Irish or British	73.54%	58.0%	-15.6
White: Irish	0.87%	0.3%	-0.6
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.11%	0.6%	+0.5
White: Roma	0.18%	0%	-0.18
White: Other White	6.35%	5.5%	-0.9
Arab	0.57%	1.4%	+0.9
Any other ethnic group	1.61%	1.9%	+0.3
Not disclosed to BUK		0.9%	+0.9

6.4 Wales ALL Applications (n 252)



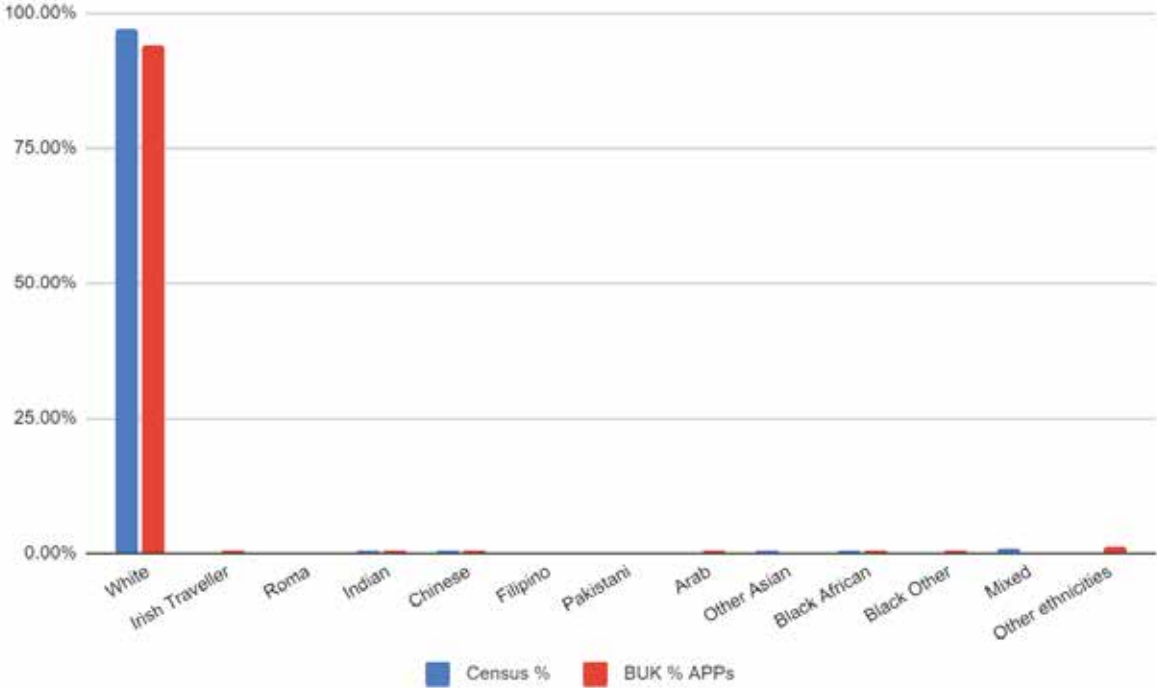
6.5 Wales ALL applications excluding White British (n 39)



Applications in Wales of ethnicities other than White British largely show an alignment to the census population.

6.6 Northern Ireland ALL Applications (n 167)

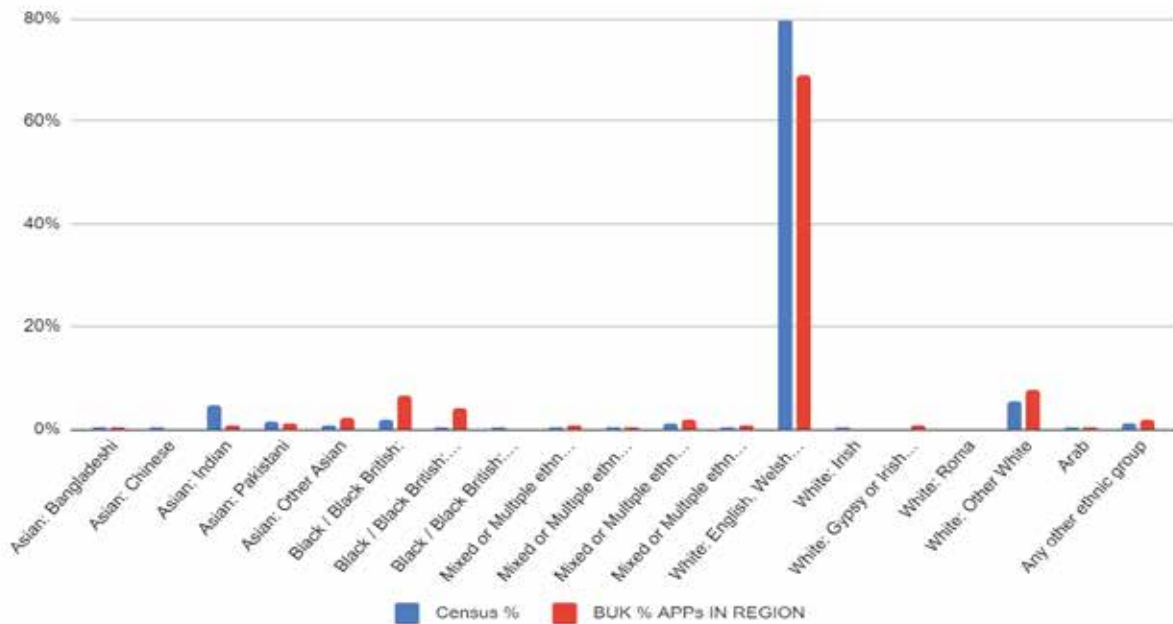
The Northern Ireland Census used different ethnicity options to the England and Wales census. White includes the groups that in the other results would be counted under White: British; White: Other and White: Irish. Filipino was offered (or recorded) as a specific ethnic group, rather than part of 'Other Asian'. In general, whilst applications align to the census, the volume of applications we manage in Northern Ireland means that it is difficult to draw any meaningful conclusions.



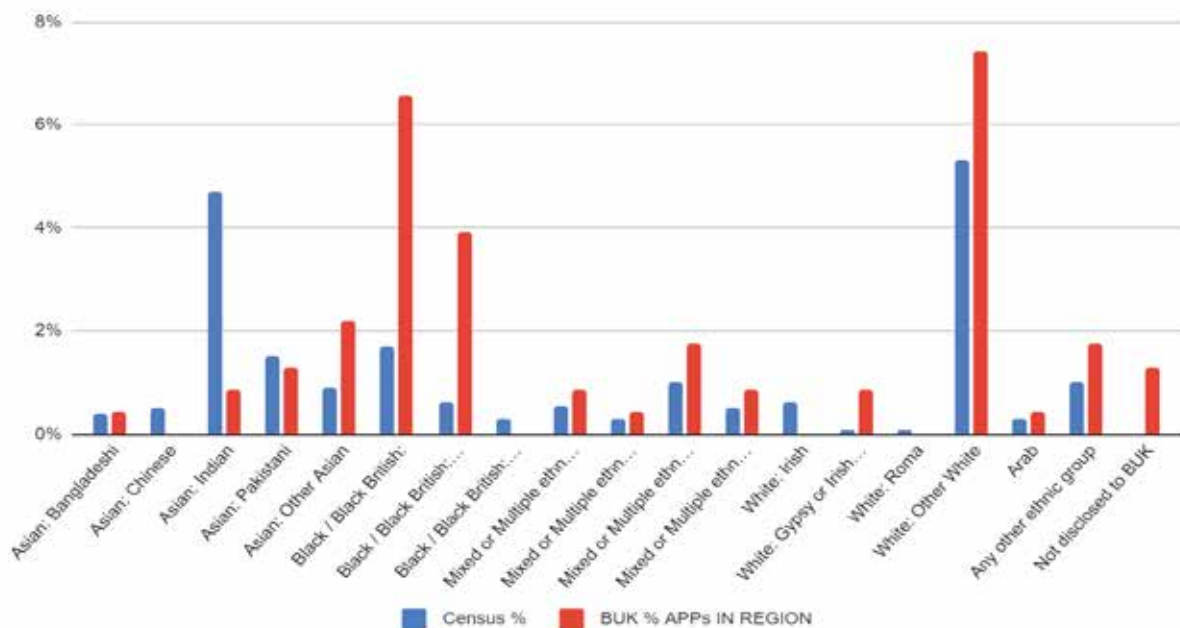
When we removed White as a group, we were left with 10 applications. We have not included that table as it is impossible to draw any conclusions from the small amount of data.

12.6% (32) of applications to Buttle UK in the East of England come from Black British Africans, despite this group being 1.7% of the region's population. This is a significant difference. The applications for this group were coming from 25 different agencies. They were not significantly grouped by local authority area. Because of the very spread out application pattern this suggests that the vulnerability and need of the families is the primary factor for the high number of applications.

7.3 East Midlands ALL applications (n 229)

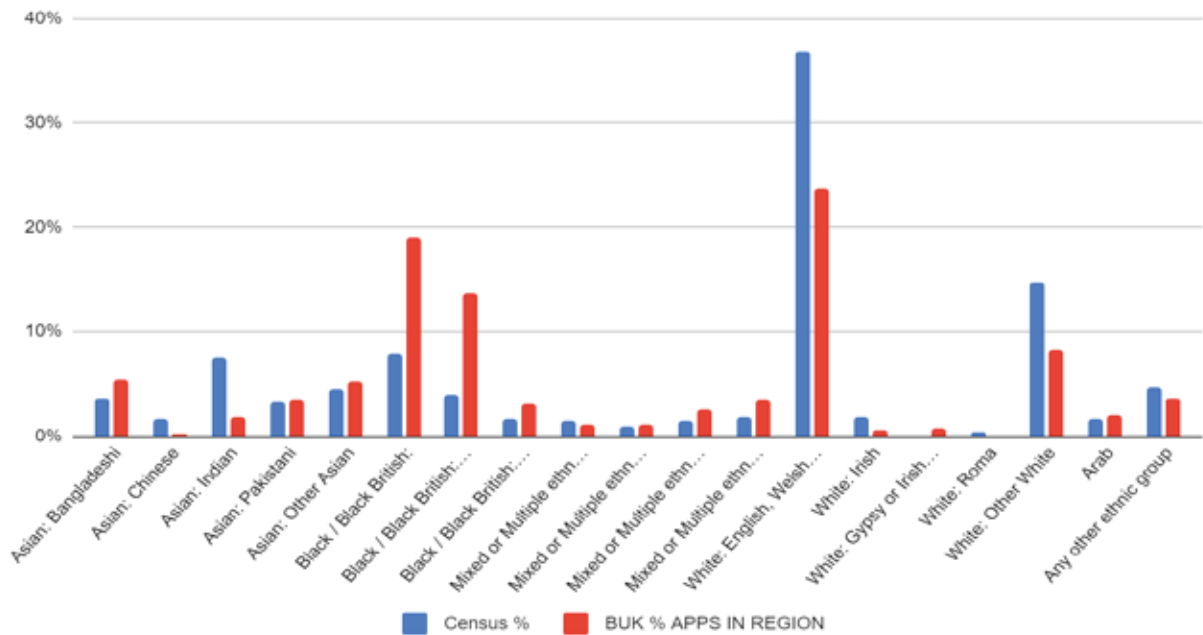


7.4 East Midlands ALL applications excluding White British (n 71)

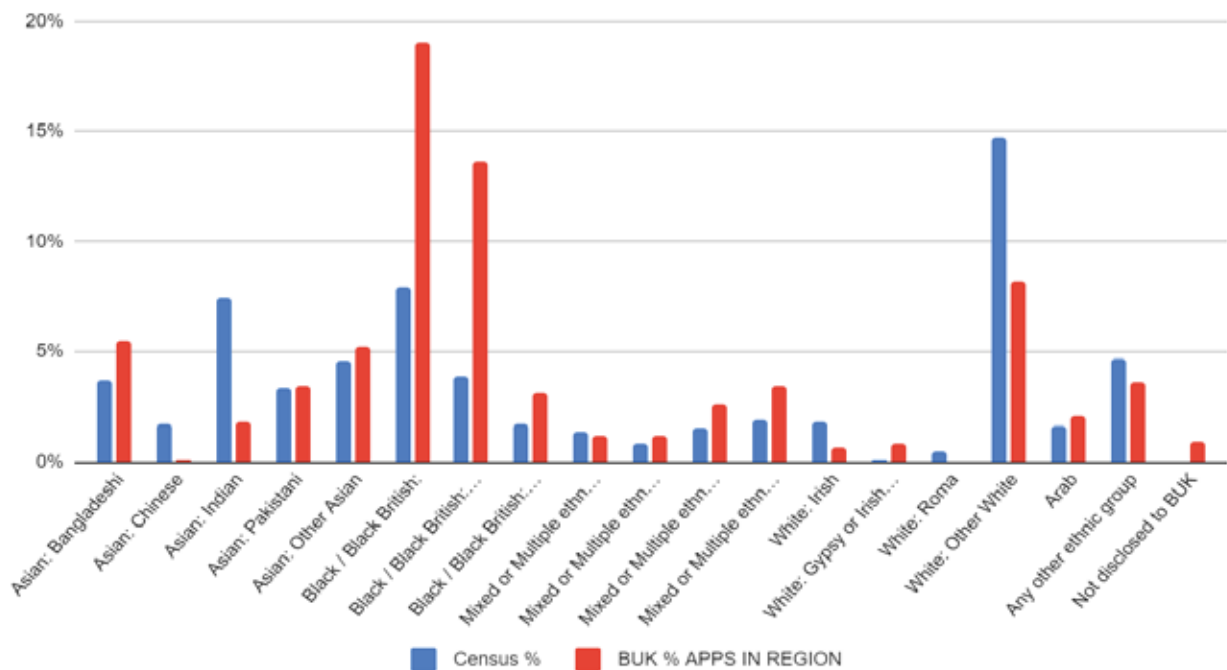


Applications for both Black British African and Black British Caribbean are at a much higher rate than their regional population. 6.6% of applications (15 applications) are from Black British African families and 3.9% of applications (9 applications) are from Black British Caribbean, against respective population percentages of 0.92% and 0.39%. Conversely we have low numbers of applications from Indian families (4.7% of the region’s population yet 0.9% of applications).

7.5 London ALL applications (n 769)



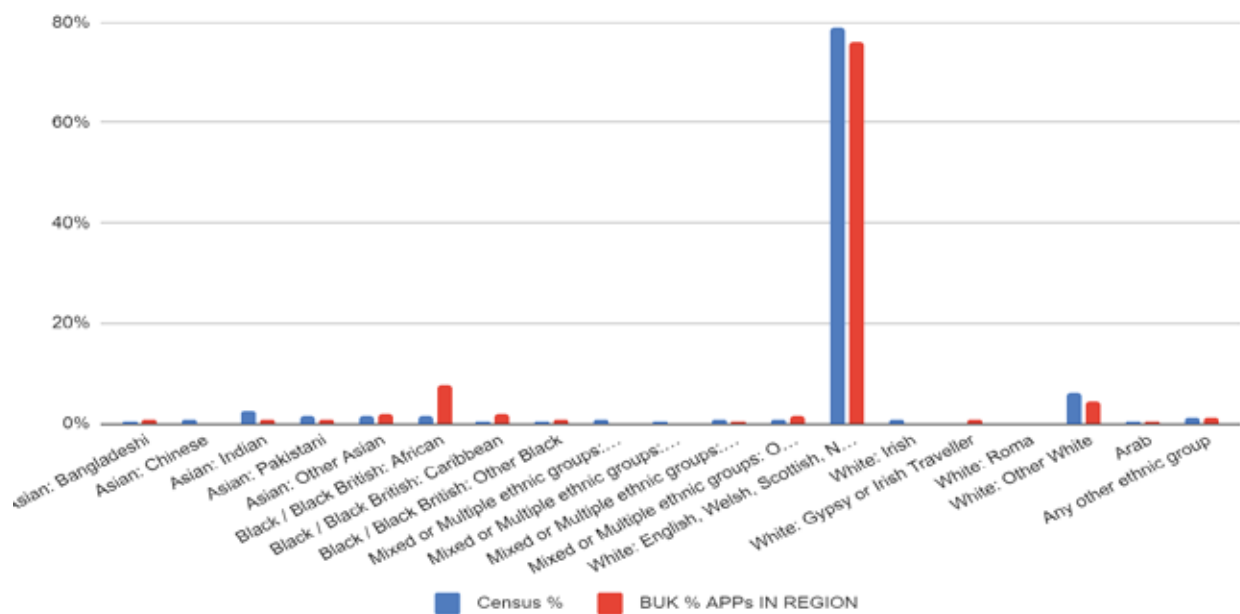
7.6 London ALL applications excluding White British (n 587)



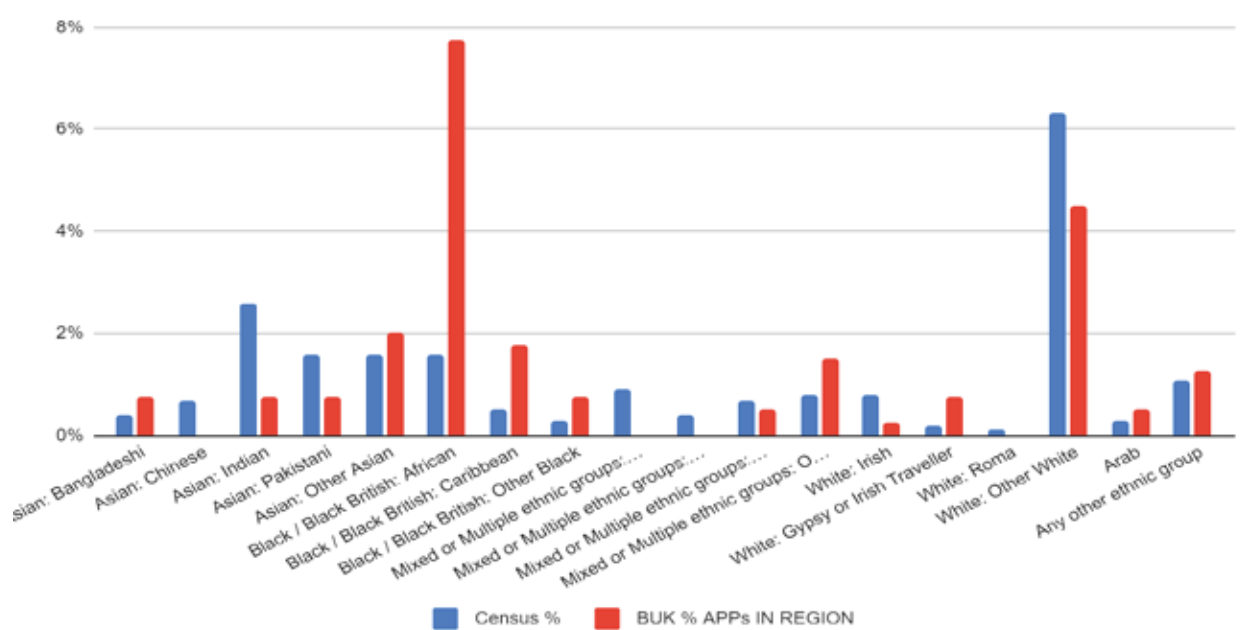
In London, applications from Chinese, Indian and Other White families and young people are noticeably lower than the London population share for each group. By contrast, 19% of our applications come from Black British African families, who make up 7.5% of the London population and 14% from Black Caribbean (3.9% of the population).

Applications (42) from those who identify as Bangladeshi are slightly higher than the census (5.5% of applications compared to 3.5% of the population). Over half of England’s Bangladeshi community live in London.

7.7 South East ALL Applications (n 400)

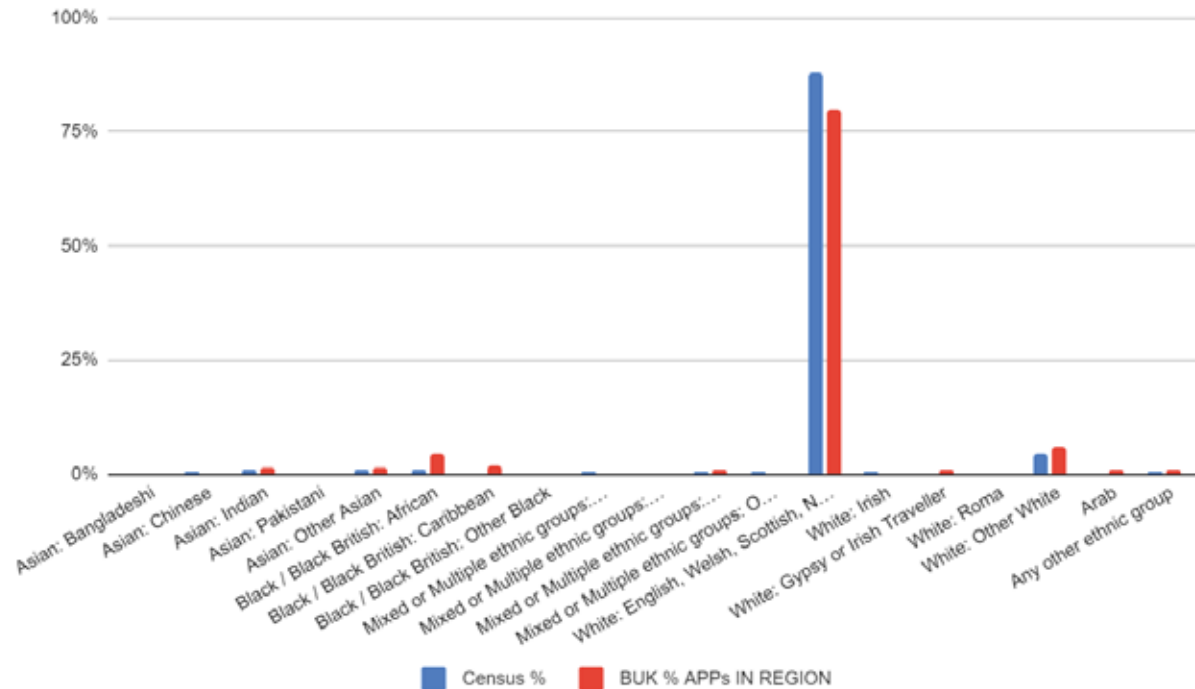


7.8 South East ALL Applications excluding White British (n 95)

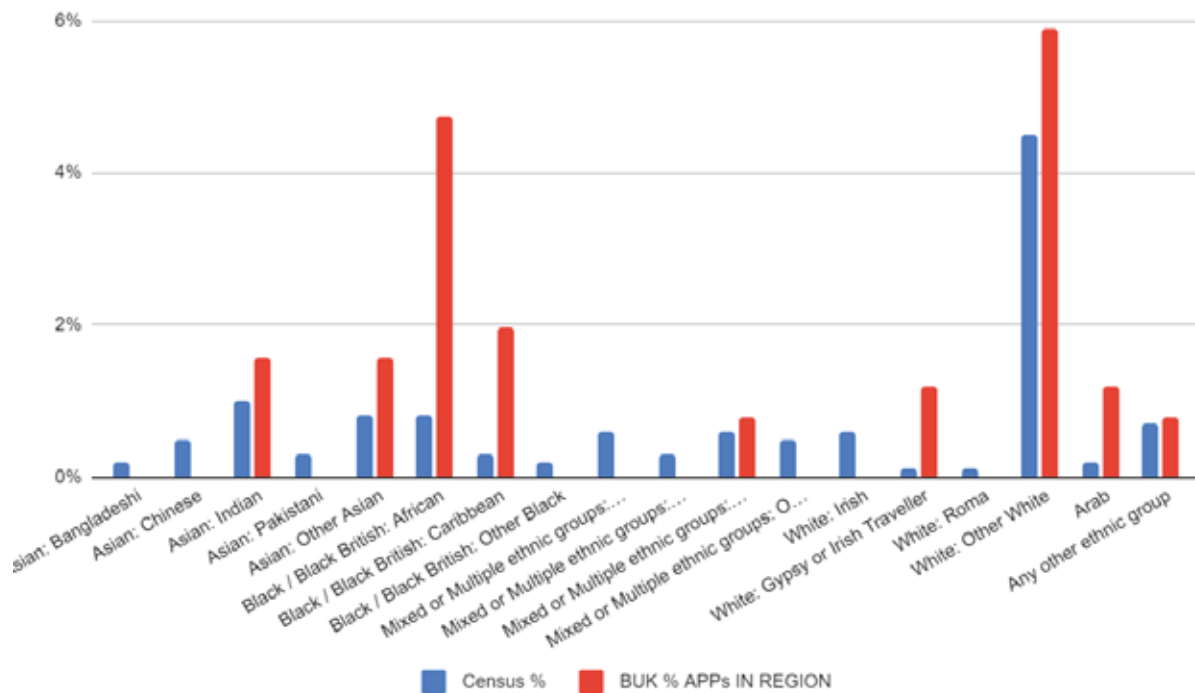


We see another spike in applications from Black families and young people in the South East and South West.

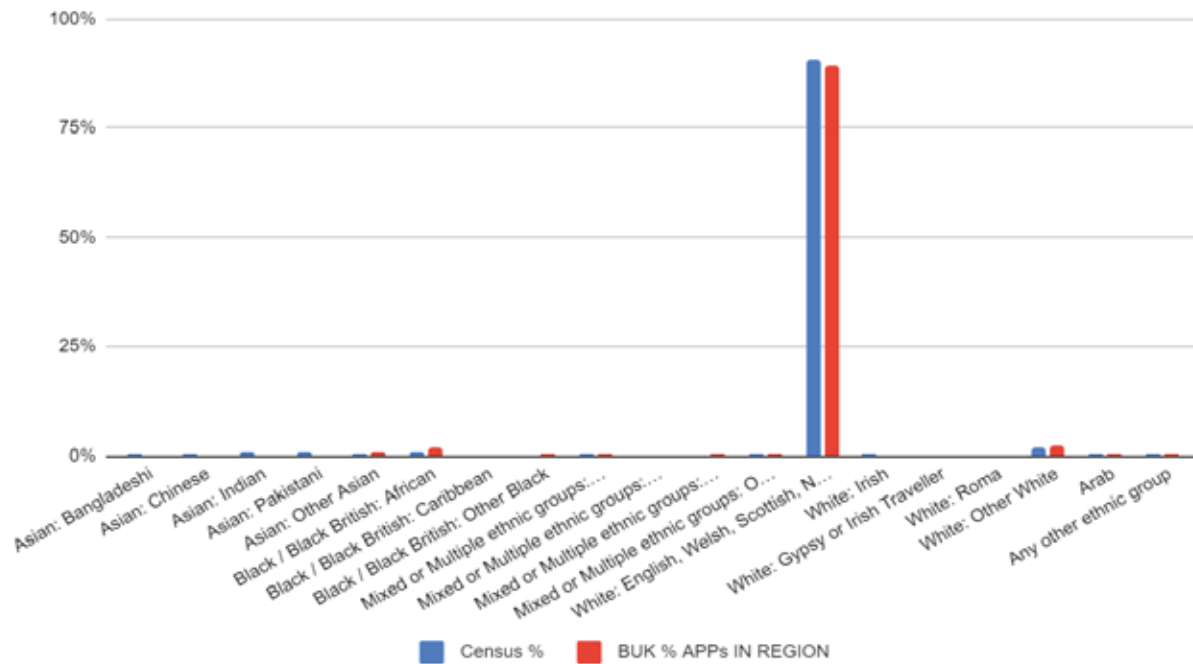
7.9 South West ALL Applications (n 254)



7.10 South West ALL Applications excluding White British (n 51)

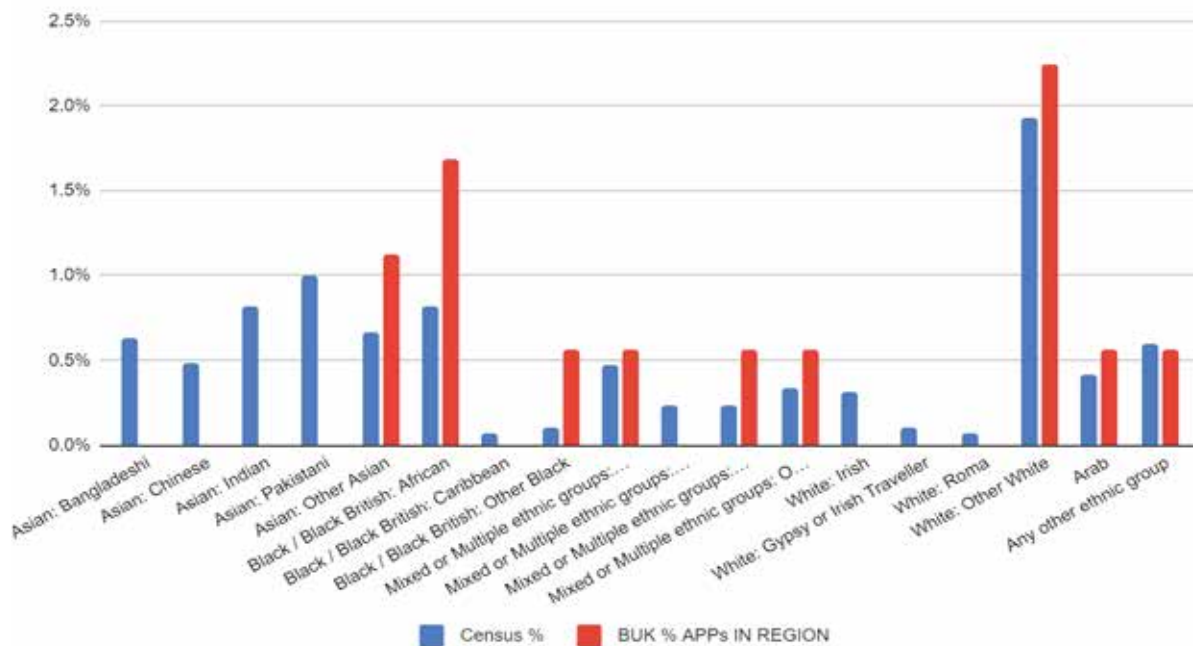


7.11 North East - ALL applications (n 181)

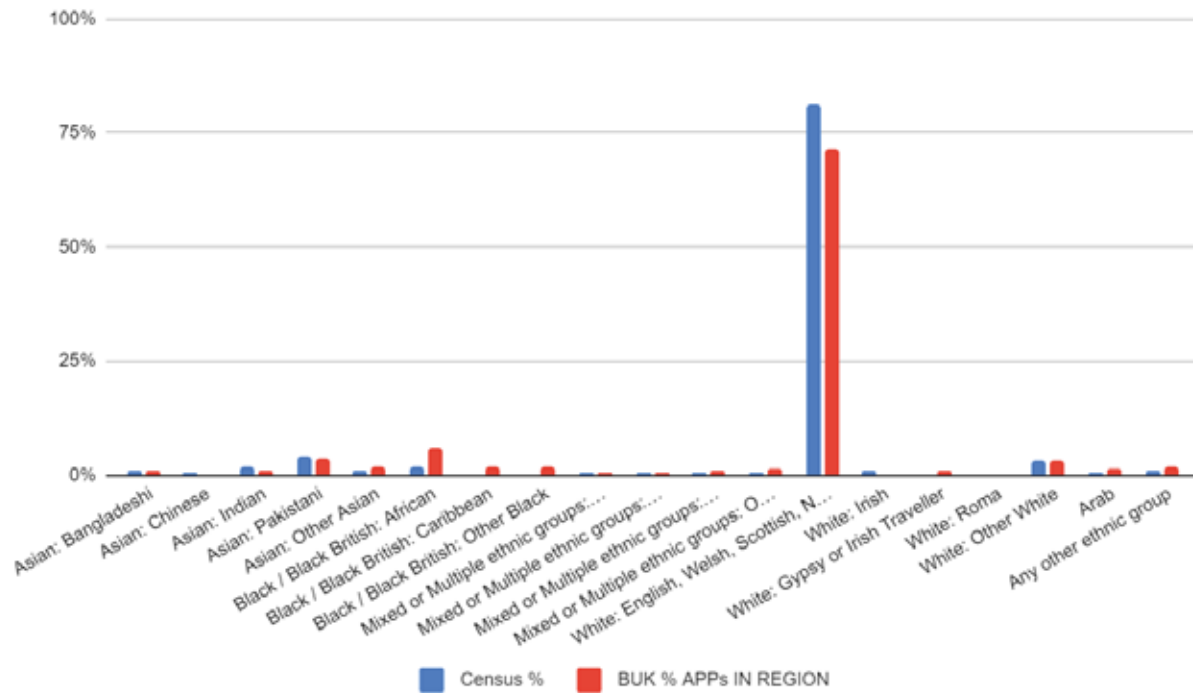


In 2022, End Child Poverty found that the North East has the highest percentage of ethnic families living in poverty, with 64% of children in ethnic families experiencing poverty, compared with 33% of those in white families. Populations are small (100,000 Asians in the region) but we had only two applications from Asian families or young people in the period we looked at. We will continue to monitor this.

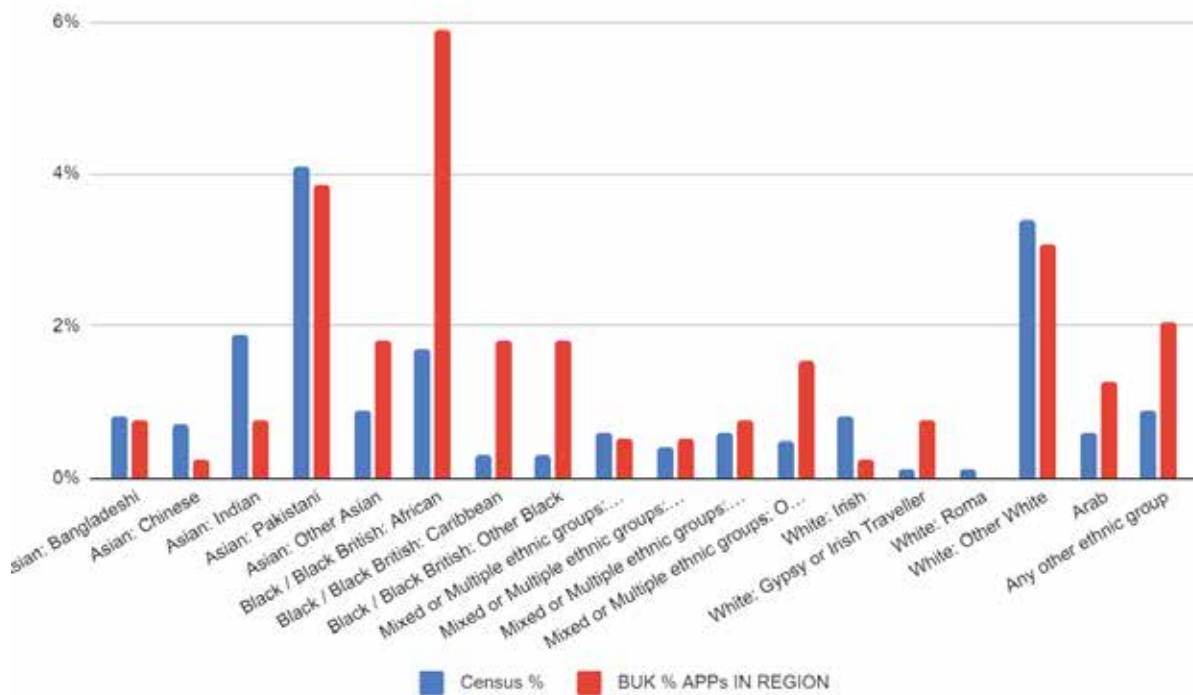
7.12 North East - ALL applications excluding White British (n 22)



7.13 North West ALL applications (n 390)

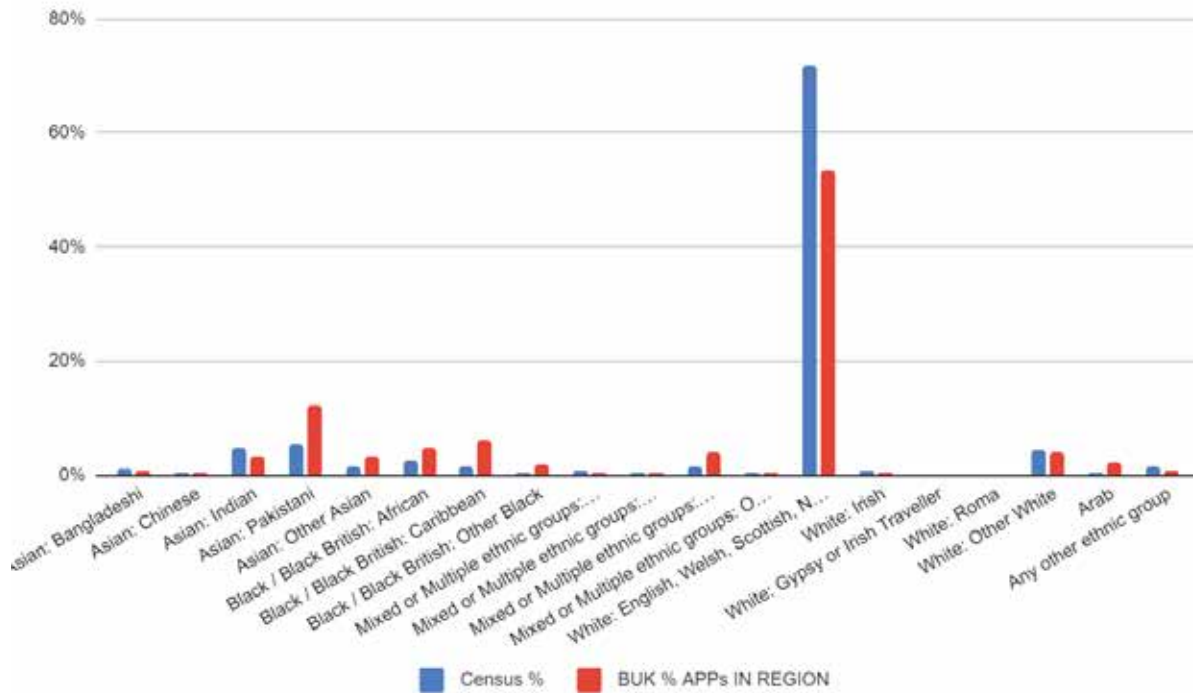


7.14 North West ALL applications excluding White British (n 112)

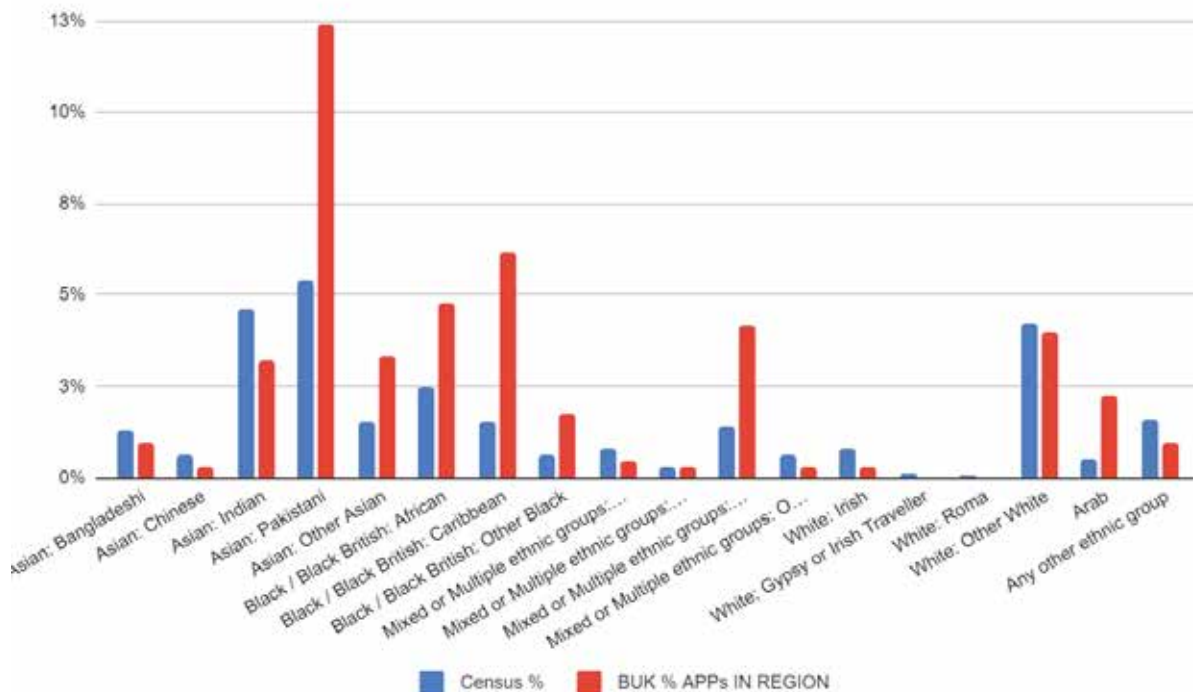


The North West applications align very closely to the local population, excepting the spike for Black families and young people.

7.15 West Midlands ALL applications (n 629)



7.16 West Midlands ALL applications excluding White British (n 292)

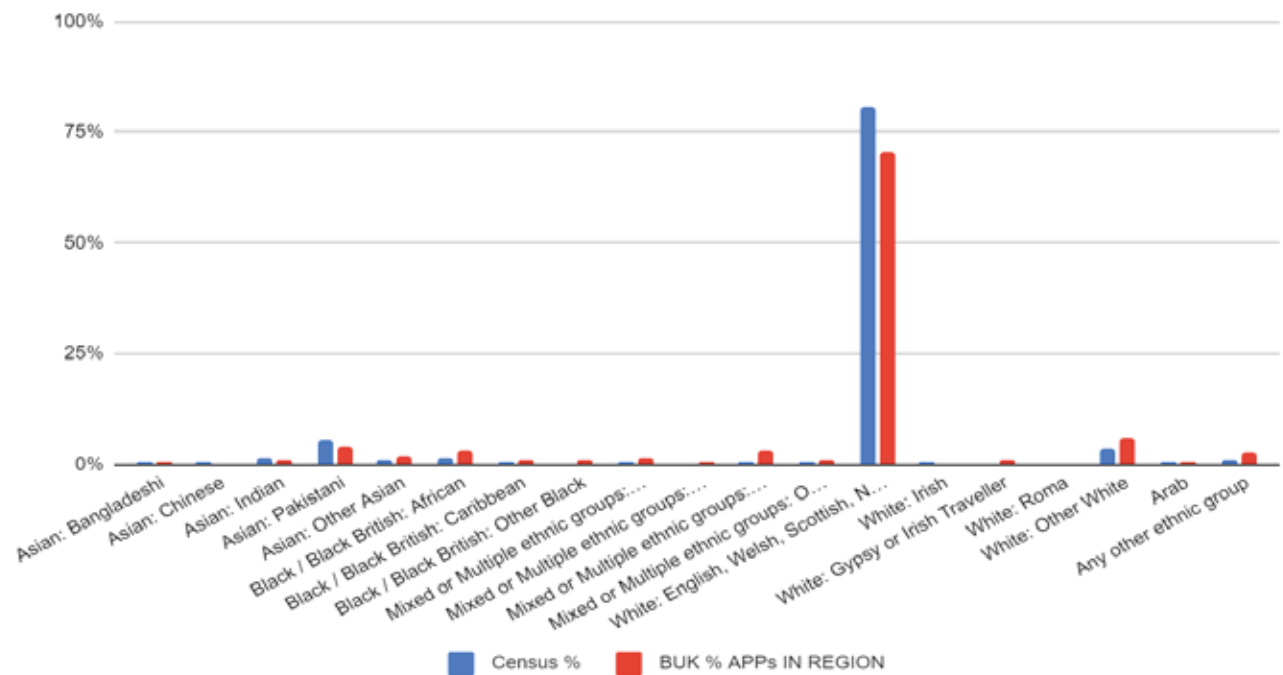


The West Midlands has close alignment to the local population, with one significant exception and one smaller difference. It has a very high percentage of applications (12.4% / 78 applications) from the Pakistani community. It is the only region with this variation. Pakistani is

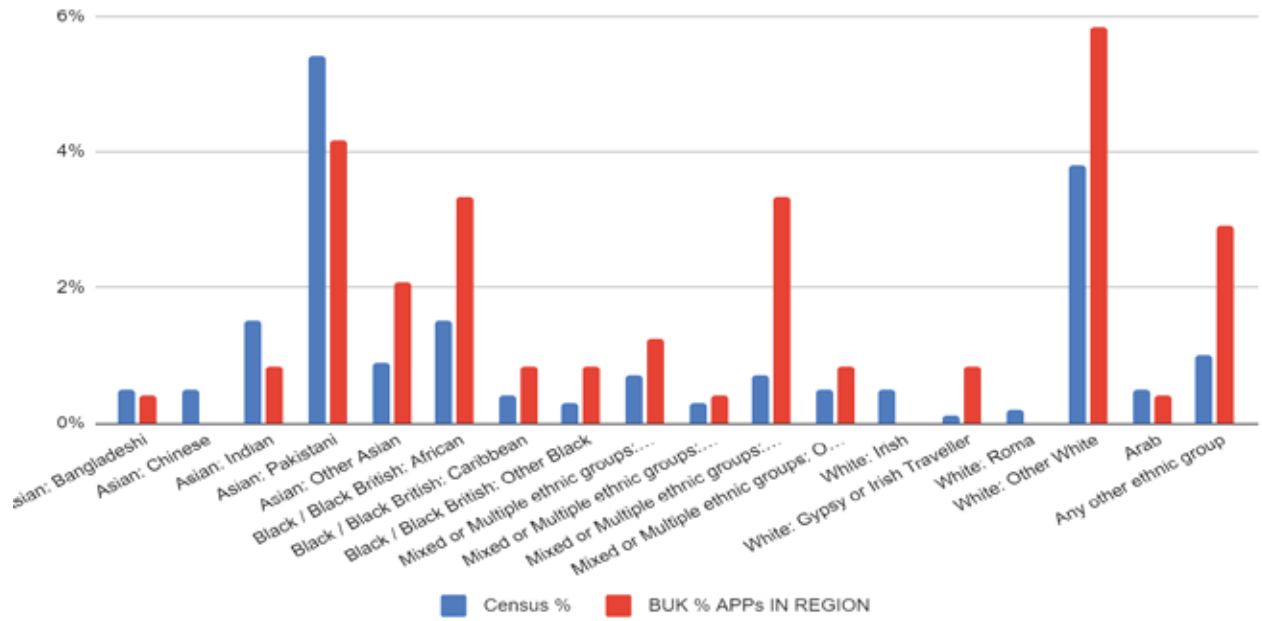
the second largest applicant group in the West Midlands, at a much higher rate than the population share of 5.4%. Both Yorkshire & Humber and the North West have similar sized Pakistani populations but applications align to the population size. Black Caribbean is also higher than the population making up 6.2% of applications (39) versus 1.5% of the population.

We looked at all applications for Pakistani led households from the West Midlands. Applications were from 20 agencies, although mainly from four large frontline agencies including Birmingham Social Services. None of those agencies were dedicated to specifically supporting Pakistani communities. Most of the applications were from the Birmingham local authority area (a very large and diverse area), with much smaller numbers of applications from other West Midlands authorities. This suggests that vulnerability and need is driving the high application numbers rather than any geographic grouping or community prioritisation from agencies.

7.17 Yorkshire & Humber ALL applications (n 240)



7.18 Yorkshire & Humber ALL applications excluding White British (n 71)



8. Our Conclusions

This was the first time we had analysed our application ethnicity data. As explained in Sections 1 and 4, we did not expect the applications we receive to exactly mirror the census. This is because ethnic groups other than white are more likely to be living in poverty and poverty is a significant factor in every application we consider.

We were very encouraged to see such a mix of ethnicities from across England, Wales and Northern Ireland as it suggests there are limited barriers in accessing the frontline agencies that then apply to us.

Having completed this exercise, which was reviewed with all staff, trustees and a group of referrers from frontline agencies, we plan to do the following:

- Repeat this exercise every two years, including monitoring award and rejection rates
- Include children's ethnicity data in future comparisons
- Analyse Scottish data and add it to this report in 2024/25
- Undertake outreach to charities supporting Roma and Chinese communities, seeking referral agencies for Chinese children and young people in London, North West and the South East and for Roma children and young people in London and the South East.

We would like to compare these figures to other similar frontline funders but sadly, there is limited data available for us to do this. We encourage other individual grantmakers to review their data in a similar way to understand who is applying, and who is receiving grants.

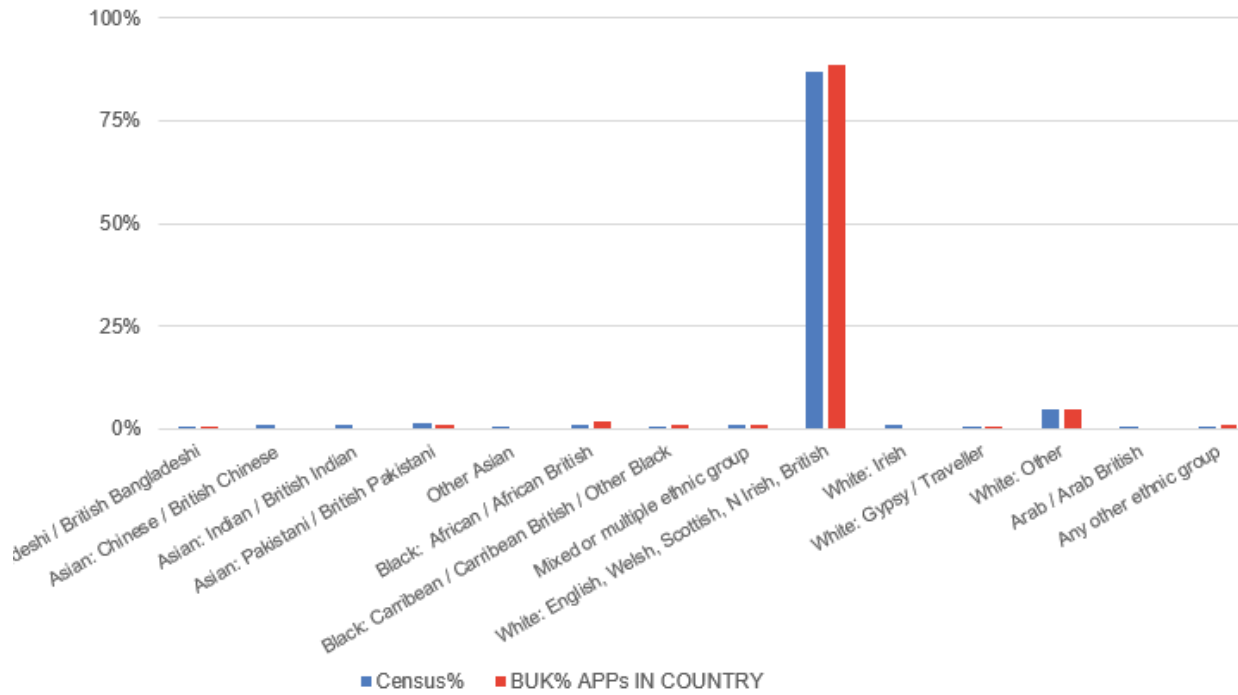
A1. Addendum: Scotland Analysis

This addendum has been added to capture ethnicity data from Scotland's Census, which took place in March 2022 and was published in Summer 2024.

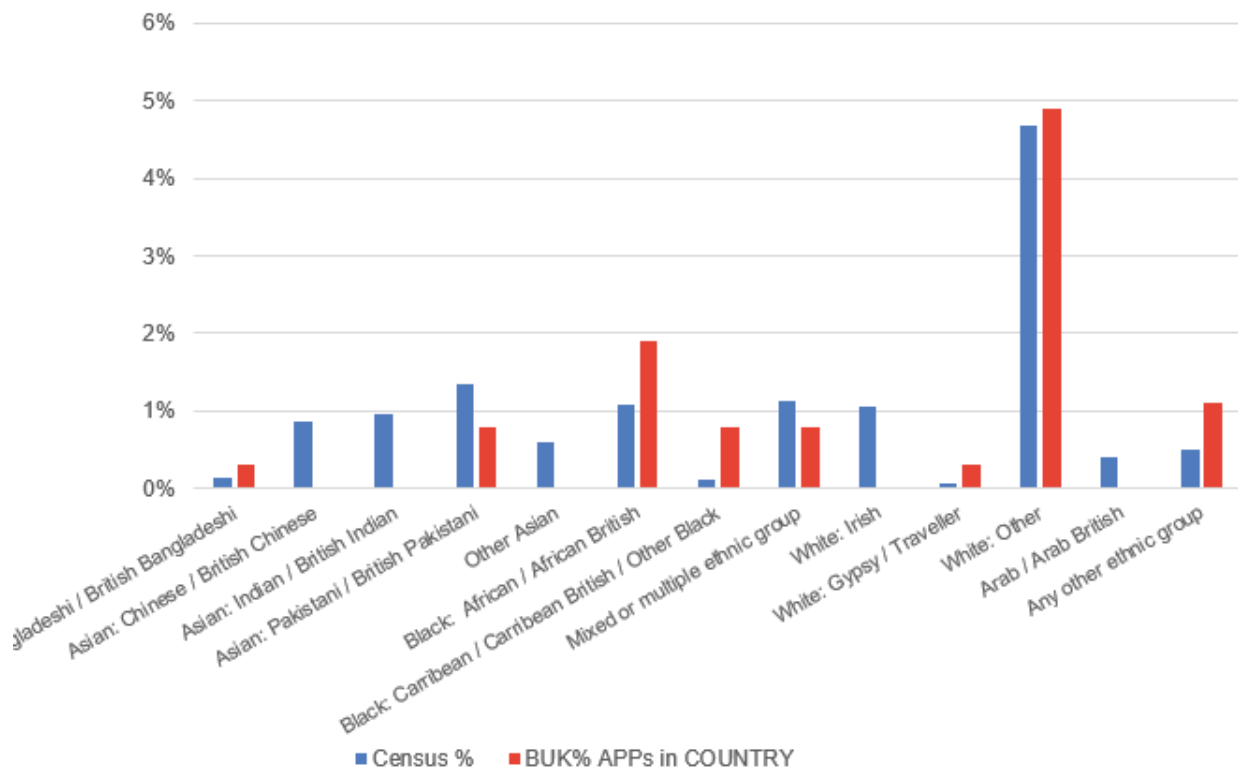
The charts below compare the ethnicity of Chances for Children applicants in Scotland with the Census data, covering Buttle applications from 1 April 2023 to 1 April 2024. This timeframe differs from the rest of the report to align with Scotland's census data, ensuring a consistent comparison.

The data shows that applications in Scotland largely align to the census population. Applications from Black families and young people are still marginally overrepresented, but we do not see the same notable spikes as in some parts of England.

A1.1 Scotland ALL applications (n 367)



A1.2 Scotland ALL applications excluding White British (n 42)





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